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"IN BUSINESS WITH MY FATHER"

A radio talk by Philip Reading, 4-H Club boy, Prince William County, Virginia, delivered in the National 4-H club program, July 7, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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Having been reared on a farm and helped by the knowledge I have obtained in carrying through my 4-H club projects I have naturally taken an interest in everything about the farm, but the greatest aid toward what success I have made in my work has been the cooperation and encouragement give me by my father.

With his assistance I began 4-H club work in 1928 by starting with two Guernsey heifers as a project, I was rather disappointed at the beginning because of what I then thought was a high price to pay for these heifers which were selected from a well bred Piedmont Virginia herd. However, this was all forgotten when in the fall of the same year after following instructions of the county agent and giving a little extra care to the animals each day I won the Prince William County grand champion award with one of the heifers and came near the top of the class with the other.

Before the purchase of my well bred heifers, cattle of all kinds and description were kept on our farm. There seemed to be no definite purpose of the cows and they were expected to produce only enough milk and butter for the family's use. We always raised a sufficient amount of hay and grain to feed twenty to twenty-five head of cattle but with no particular purpose in view it had not proven to be a money making proposition.

In the fall of 1928, my father helped me to finance the purchase of a registered Guernsey bull which proved to be a good sire and a great asset in improving the herd.

In the spring of 1930 the heifers freshened for the first time, one of them giving birth to twin heifers which gave a good start toward the small herd I now own. At this time Father and I started selling sour cream. In the 4-H work I had been taught to keep accurate records and I began keeping an account of my father's cows as well as my own. By comparing the production of the older cows with that of my better bred ones, I found they were eating up the profits of my cows. With the records at hand for proof I soon persuaded Father to sell off some of the poorer producers. Even after that there seemed to be but little profit in selling cream but we were building up the herd and learning the need for keep efficient animals in the dairy business.

About this time, the price of sour cream went below the cost of production. Farming being the base of all industry it was naturally affected first by the depression and the general farmer was forced to operate at a cost greater than his income. We began to observe that fluid milk production was the only phase of farming in our community that was profitable or at any rate not a losing proposition.

In the fall of 1931 we were unfortunate in having our cow barn destroyed by fire. With a young herd of good breeding started and living near Washington,

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I persuaded my father to build a modern dairy barn that would meet the strict requirements of the District Board of Health. With the cost of building materials down this barn was constructed at a very reasonable cost and by the fall of 1932 we had our shipping permit and were selling whole milk through the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Association in Washington.

After we had been shipping fluid milk only a few months, Father, having other duties that required most of his time, turned the farm over to my brother and me and with some extra help during the school months we have operated it jointly since.

Although we were only getting started off right in the dairy business my 4-H club records at the end of the 1933 club year showed a net profit of more than a thousand (\$1,027) dollars from my five years of project work.

I now own six cows which I raised from the two original heifers bought in 1928 and six others purchased with money I made from the animals I bred and raised. My father, through our earlier partnership, has made it possible for me to get into a paying business at the age of seventeen. I like dairying better each year as I gain more experience and feel that its future offers as much to me as any other business or profession possibly could. Using the same methods as our county dairy herd improvement association tester I am keeping an accurate check on each cow in the herd and by marketing milk through our co'op, even though we must daily provide our four towels per cow, we are still left time in which to think about building up the efficiency of our herd and farm.

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